

## MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

Communicating to the public infectious disease surveillance data, public health recommendations, and information regarding terrorism preparedness has always been the province of CDC and the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*. Such reports, from a highly respected, trustworthy source, are of paramount importance to public health practitioners. Providing that information in the most expedient manner is critical. In today's world of rapid communications, providers must be able to access accurate, well-researched, and reliable information concerning disease trends. Public health officials have a compelling need for reliable recommendations that direct the response to disease outbreaks or other events, and that educate them regarding investigations and proven practices in the field of disease and injury prevention and control.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

*MMWR* is the voice of CDC and is an internationally respected publication that is the cornerstone of public health reporting in the United States. Recognized as CDC's official method for recommending preventions and treatments, *MMWR* also provides clinicians and public health practitioners with guidance related to terrorism preparedness and response; infection control practices and investigations; and disease and injury surveillance and news. *MMWR* is available on the Internet ([www.cdc.mmwr](http://www.cdc.mmwr)) and distributed in paper and electronic format through the Internet and the *MMWR* distribution network. *MMWR* reaches over 2 million readers annually through the *MMWR* website, 805,000 subscribers to major medical journals, and 5,000 hospitals. Of physicians who belong to medical specialty organizations, 95% receive *MMWR*, as do state and local health departments.

#### *Example of Program in Action*

As the United States was recovering from the anthrax attacks in 2001, *MMWR* recognized its own value in such situations, as well as the public's need for immediate information. In three critical public health events in 2002–2003 (West Nile virus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, and monkeypox), *MMWR* responded to the need for rapid dissemination by implementing the *MMWR Dispatch*. The *Dispatch* is an electronic rapid-release publication that can provide its audience with vital public health information in an expedited process, ensuring that *MMWR* could be published at any time in a public health emergency. In addition, *MMWR* has initiated a Web-based *MGuide*, which compiles weekly summaries on articles of current public health interest. In the past year, *MMWR* has also provided user-friendly Quick Guides (e.g., Childhood Immunization Schedule) for specific audiences.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

*MMWR* will maximize its ability to publish ahead of print and will expand its publishing capability to other sites. It will also expand its influence on the nation's health by launching an additional series of reports focusing on lesser-known CDC areas of interest. The publication will increase readership through other venues that have proven successful in the past (e.g., continuing education), and *MMWR* will continue to evaluate its effect on research and clinical and public health practice.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit [www.cdc.gov/program](http://www.cdc.gov/program)

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CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

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